Cold and Flu Self Care Computer-Based Training

Questions … Please see the Family Health front desk or Pharmacy

If any of the below are true, **STOP** this training and call 784-APPT (2778) to make an appointment to **see a provider.**

Note: You do NOT need to be seen by a provider to be put on Quarters. You can be placed on limited quarters, by your supervisor.

- Pregnant/Breastfeeding
- PRP/Flying Status
- Shortness of breath not due to nasal con
- Symptoms more than 7 days in duration
- Chronic illness:
  - Asthma/COPD
  - Hypertension (high blood pressure)
  - Diabetes
  - Heart Disease
- Less than 18 years of age
- Greater than 55 years of age

Bacterial versus Viral Infections

- Bacteria can exist as independent (free-living) microorganisms or as parasites (dependent upon another organism for life).
  - Examples of illnesses caused by a bacteria include strep throat, most urinary tract infections, and gonorrhea.
  - Bacterial infections **ARE** treated with antibiotics (penicillin, etc.).

- Viruses are microorganisms smaller than a bacteria, which cannot grow or reproduce apart from being inside another living cell.
  - Examples of illnesses caused by a virus include the common cold, the flu, HIV/AIDs, and hepatitis.
  - Viral infections are **NOT** treated with an antibiotic … the infection will **NOT** improve! For the cold/flu, usually only symptoms are treated, and most often with over-the-counter (OTC) medications.

The Common Cold & Flu

- A **Cold** is a **viral** upper respiratory infection.
  - If you have a cold, you will likely have a combination of the following symptoms:

Sore throat
Runny nose
Stuffy/congested nose
Stuffy/congested ears
Hoarseness
Cough
Swollen glands
Fever (usually low grade, less than 101°F)

- The **Flu** is also a **viral** infection.
  - You may have some of the same types of symptoms as you would a cold
  - With the flu though, you will likely experience a higher fever (greater than 100.5 °F), headache, and muscle aches and pain, especially the lower back and eye muscles, more so than if you have a cold.

The Flu

- Only in certain circumstances does the flu need to be treated with an antiviral medication.
- If you meet any of the below criteria, please contact your provider:
  - Severe, complicated or progressive illness(es)
  - Higher risk for flu complications:
    - Children less than 5 years of age
    - Adults 65 years of age or older
    - Chronic medical conditions
    - Pregnant or postpartum women (2 weeks or less after delivery)
    - Persons less than 19 years of age on long-term aspirin therapy
    - American Indians and Alaskan Natives
    - Morbidly obese (BMI 40 or greater)
  - Close contact (i.e., family member) of those groups listed above
- If you are a normal healthy individual, you only need to treat your symptoms while your body capably fights off the infection.

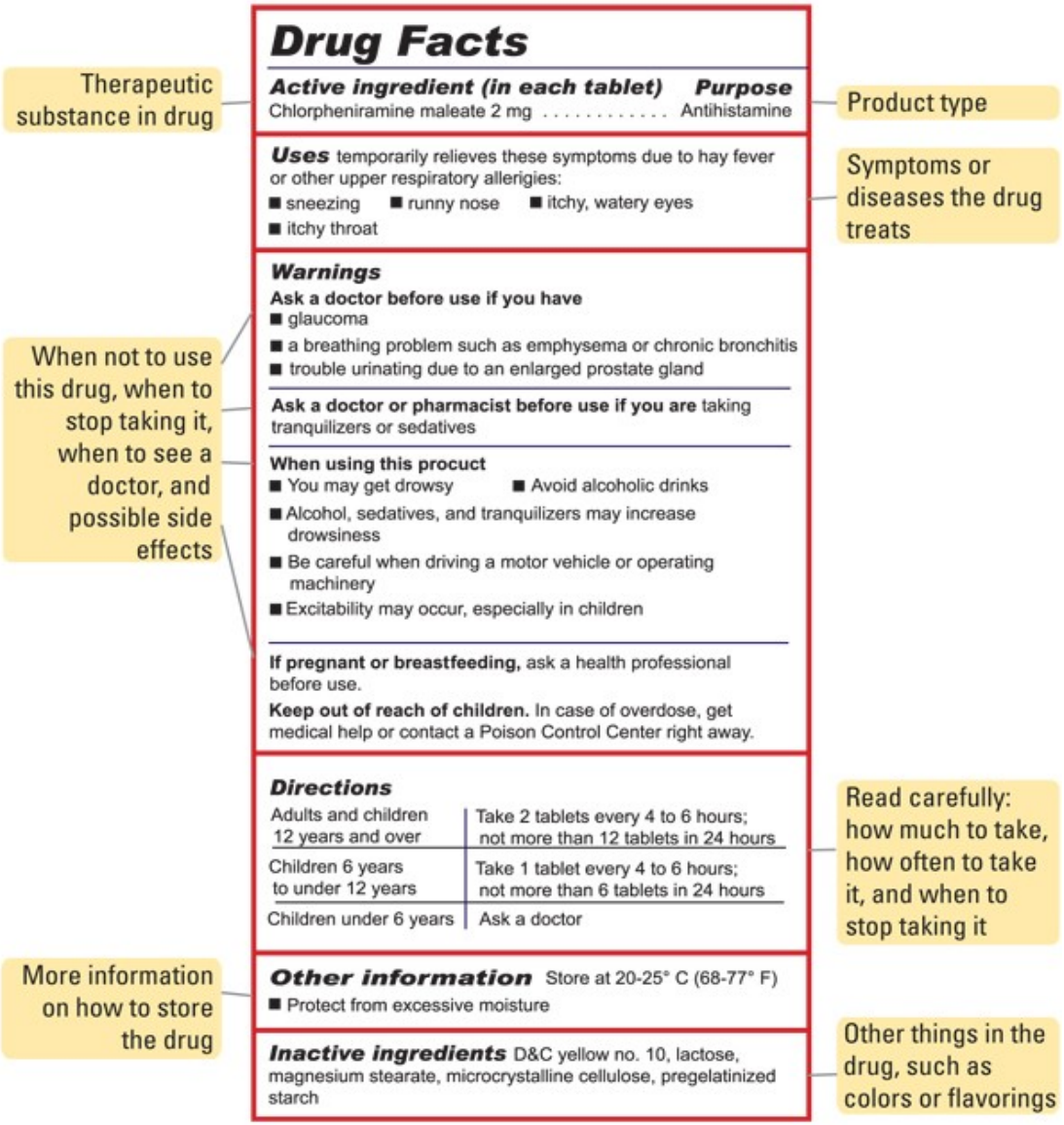
Cold and Flu Treatment

- Drink lots of fluids
- Get plenty of rest
- Blow your nose (makes you feel better! and moves mucus, virus particles, and other allergens outside of the body)
- Wash your hands often

Cold/Flu OTC Medicine Treatments

- The drugs that are recommended for you to take depend on the symptoms that you are experiencing.
- It is very important to read the labels on any OTC medications you get either at the store or even at our pharmacy.
- Many OTC medications have multiple ingredients, some of which may be in other medications you are taking or may not even treat the symptoms you are having (which then increases your risk of drug reactions with no benefit).

OTC Drug Label Example


Therapeutic substance in drug
Drug Facts
Active ingredient (in each tablet) Purpose
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg ..... Antihistamine
Product type
Uses temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allerigies:
■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes
■ itchy throat
Symptoms or diseases the drug treats
Warnings
Ask a doctor before use if you have
■ glaucoma
■ a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
■ trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland
When not to use this drug, when to stop taking it, when to see a doctor, and possible side effects
Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives
When using this procuct
■ You may get drowsy ■ Avoid alcoholic drinks
■ Alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
■ Be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
■ Excitability may occur, especially in children
If pregnant or breastfeeding, ask a health professional before use.
Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.
Directions
Adults and children 12 years and over | Take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
Children 6 years to under 12 years | Take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
Children under 6 years | Ask a doctor
Read carefully: how much to take, how often to take it, and when to stop taking it
More information on how to store the drug
Other information Store at 20-25° C (68-77° F)
■ Protect from excessive moisture
Inactive ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch
Other things in the drug, such as colors or flavorings

Types of OTC Cold/Flu Medications

- The following are types of OTC medications used to treat different symptoms of a cold or flu:
  - **Pain/Fever medications:** help decrease pain (body aches, sore throat, headache) and decrease fever; e.g., acetominophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Motrin), and naproxen (Aleve). Do not exceed recommended dosages.
  - **Antihistamines:** help treat runny noses, watery eyes, and sneezing.; e.g. diphenhydramine (Benadryl), chlorpheniramine, loratadine (Claritin), certirizine (Zyrtec), and fexofenadine (Allegra). Some may cause drowsiness.
  - **Decongestants:** help relieve nasal congestion (stuffy nose); e.g., pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) and phenylephrine (Sudafed PE).
  - **Nasal Sprays:** help with nasal congestion; e.g., saline nasal spray, oxymetazoline (Afrin). Do not use Afrin for more than 3 consecutive days.
  - **Expectorants:** help to loosen phlegm to make coughs productive and relieve chest congestion; e.g., guaifenesin (Mucinex or Robitussin). Drink plenty of water.
  - **Cough Suppressants:** help to suppress (stop) dry, hacking coughs that prevent sleep, work or are too bothersome; e.g., dextromethorphan (Delsym), dextromethorphan/guaifenesin (Robitussin DM).
  - **Local Anesthetics:** help to numb an area of the body that hurts (i.e. a sore throat); e.g., phenol (Chloroseptic Spray), menthol (N'Ice Lozenges).

Last Words of Advice

- Many OTC cold/flu products contain multiple ingredients. Always read the label, especially if you are using multiple products, to make sure you are not taking the same medication/class of medications.
- Always follow the directions on the label.
- If your symptoms get worse/not getting better within 7 days of onset, you should make an appointment to see your Primary Care Manager (PCM).
- Colds and the Flu are contagious! If you don't have to be at work, you shouldn't be. Your supervisor can authorize time off for simple illnesses—A QUARTERS SLIP IS NOT REQUIRED. If your supervisor is unsure about this, refer them to your 1st Sergeant or Squadron Commander…they have been briefed on this by the medical staff.

Cold and Flu Self Care Quiz

For each question, you will need to click on the correct answer. If you get the answer right, you will automatically go to the next slide. If you get it wrong you will not be able to go to the next slide and will need to answer correctly before you will be allowed to proceed.

Please go to the next slide when you are ready to begin your 10 question quiz.

1. A cold is caused by a bacteria.
    a. True
    b. False

2. All of the following are examples of an infection caused by a virus except:
    a. Flu
    b. Common Cold
    c. Strep Throat
    d. HIV/AIDs

3. Antibiotics, such as penicillin, will treat a cold or flu.
    a. True
    b. False

4. What is an example of a non-drug therapy for a cold or flu?
    a. Drink minimal fluids.
    b. Get plenty of rest.
    c. Wash your hands only after using the bathroom.
    d. Sniff your nose instead of blowing it .

5. All of the following are types of over-the counter (OTC) medications used to treat different cold/flu symptoms except:
    a. Expectorants
    b. Decongestants
    c. Antihistamines
    d. Penicillin

6. It is important to use certain nasal sprays, such as Afrin, for no more than how many consecutive days?
    a. 3
    b. 5
    c. 7
    d. 10

7. What type of symptoms do antihistamines help to treat?
    a. Dry cough
    b. Achy body
    c. Runny nose
    d. Nasal congestion (stuffy nose)

8. What do expectorants do?
    a. Loosen phlegm to make coughs more productive
    b. Suppress coughs
    c. Relieve runny noses
    d. Numb painful areas

9. Cough suppressants should be used in the following instances except when:
    a. Cough is productive but not bothersome.
    b. Cough keeps you up at night.
    c. Cough becomes too bothersome.
    d. Cough prevents you from working

10. How should you take OTC cold/flu medications?
    a. However you feel like it.
    b. Twice the amount recommended on the label, especially if symptoms are really bad.
    c. As directed on the label or by provider.
    d. Without regard to the combination of ingredients found within various OTC products.

Congratulations!

You have completed the Cold and Flu Self Care CBT. Please click on the next slide to view/print off your certificate and bring it to the Pharmacy if you are in need of OTC medications for your cold/flu.

Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that

Participant's Name

has completed

The Cold and Flu Self Care Computer Based Training

This certificate is good for limited cold and flu OTC medications for 6 months from the date below

Pharmacist's Signature

Date

References

- Vickery, D.M., Fries, J.F. *Take Care of Yourself: The Complete Illustrated Guide to Medical Self-Care*, 9th ed. Philadelphia, PA: De Capo Press, 2009.